

Speeding Toward the Future of Driverless Cars

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Decades from now, transportation won't be steered by human hands.

While you might not find driverless automobiles whizzing through the streets of Chicago today, behind the scenes, several companies are testing and implementing technology for cars to navigate their surroundings sans human input.

The rideshare company Innova EV operates a fleet of small, electric cars that transport students on several college campuses.

The Burr Ridge, Illinois-based company is experimenting with automating their electric vehicles. Through a grant from the National Science Foundation, Innova EV developed an automated car providing specific location-to-location driverless transportation at Ohio State University in Columbus.

Innova EV founder and CEO Roman Kuropas said an individual can still override the autonomous vehicle in the case of an emergency.

"It still has an accelerator pedal, a brake and a steering wheel, but the vehicle is driving fully autonomously," Kuropas said. "We keep those for safety reasons."

The mapmaking company Here, originally based in Chicago but now owned by German automotive companies Audi, BMW and Mercedes, develops multi-layer digital maps that allow autonomous vehicles to see through buildings, around corners and 20 miles ahead while navigating.

The company's HD Live Map uses cloud-based data to constantly update driving conditions and environments.

"Unlike telling a human what to do, the machine needs a lot more detail about its environment," said Matt Preyss, a product marketing manager at Here. "Our map provides proactive maneuverability and strategic decision-making for the vehicle because it can see beyond what a car's sensors can."

The emergence of this innovative technology will require urban architects and planners to design landscapes where autonomous vehicles can operate safely and efficiently.

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency of Planning is a city agency tasked with that: envisioning how evolving technologies like driverless vehicles will interact with an urban environment and infrastructure in the next several decades.

Joining us to discuss the future of driverless transportation is [CMAP](#) associate planner Elizabeth Irvin, [Innova EV](#) founder and CEO Roman Kuropas and [Here](#) product marketing manager Matt Preyss.